



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

October 5, 2006

Regional Center Day

I am delighted to offer my warmest greetings to all those attending the fortieth Anniversary Leadership Symposium.

California has always been at the forefront of innovation and progress, setting an example for the rest of the nation. The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Act is a case in point. Forty years ago, our state launched a bold experiment in a public-private partnership that became the regional center system. This was a model service that dramatically improved the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

The Act gave these individuals the right to services that enable them to live a more independent and dignified life. It also declared that they had the same legal rights and responsibilities as all other residents and gave the regional centers the task of advocating and protecting those rights. These centers are part of a community-based network that acts as a focal point to coordinate services.

Now serving more than 210,000 individuals statewide, regional centers continue to provide innovative and cost-effective programs that allow people with developmental disabilities to achieve full inclusion into their communities. Today, I join you in celebrating the forty years of this successful venture. While there are many challenges ahead, we can be proud of how far we have come in helping our fellow Californians become active members of our state.

On behalf of all Californians, please accept my best wishes for a memorable event and every future success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Arnold Schwarzenegger".

Arnold Schwarzenegger